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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0220  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0269  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0598  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000637

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [QA](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: QATARI MEDIATION EFFORTS IN MAURITANIA

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 535

[1](#)B. DOHA 317

Classified By: CDA Dennis Hankins for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) The Qatari royal family, specifically Princess Chiekha Maouze, is beginning to increase its diplomatic profile in Mauritania with the possibility of the first serious mediation talks being held in Doha by mid-month. The Qatari Embassy, and by implication, Foreign Ministry are not central to these activities.

[1](#)2. (C) On October 30, AID Rep met with Abdelkader Ghessab, Executive Director of the bilateral Qatari Cooperation to discuss Mauritania's current political situation and Qatar's mediation efforts. Early last week, a delegation from Qatar's Arab Democracy Foundation quietly conducted an information gathering mission to Mauritania as a pre-cursor to a Doha mediation, which is tentatively scheduled between the November 10 African Union negotiations and the European Union's follow-on Article 96 meeting o/a November 20. The Arab Foundation for Democracy is a Doha-based organization created last year by the Qatari Emir's third wife and foreign policy guru, Princess Cheikha Maouze bint Nacer El Mesned. The organization is headed by a Moroccan Secretary General, Mouhsin Marzougui. The Princess also is the palace force behind the Qatari Cooperation program in Mauritania. Ghessab termed Qatari policy in Mauritania as essentially the Princess' baby.

[1](#)3. (C) In a November 2 meeting with Qatari Ambassador Mohamed Ben Kourdi Taleb el Nerri, Charge noted the Ambassador was not fully briefed on the details of the royal family's diplomatic activities -- for instance being unaware that the FNDD's Mohamed Jemil Mansour had made a trip to Doha in mid-September and stating "I have not been advised" about any possible Doha meeting in November. Charge outline the U.S. position on the coup and the need for the re-establishment of constitutional order including the return of President Abdallahi. Charge noted that Qatar had played a very supportive role to Mauritania's new democracy and that it could potentially play a useful role in the current crisis. Charge encouraged the Ambassador to be sure Qatar fully coordinated its plans with other international initiatives -- noting the importance of the AU meeting in Addis Ababa on November 10 that would pull together all the international organization initiatives. In his one substantive comment, the Qatari Ambassador said his government and the Arabs were disappointed that the African Union -- which they recognize as having the right to take the diplomatic lead -- has not been sufficiently engaged on the

Mauritanian crisis (suggesting Qatar saw the need to fill the gap).

¶4. (C) The AID Rep's meeting with Ghessab provided better information on Qatari efforts. Ghessab said the Arab Democracy Foundation delegation, led former Moroccan minister Mohamed Oujar, met with "all the important actors" of the current political crisis including Abdel Aziz and President Abdallahi. Ghessab did not participate in the delegation's meetings, however, as the Princess's Mauritania-based representative, the team debriefed him. He confided that when the delegation met with President Abdallahi, they were reportedly impressed by his lucidity. At that point, Ghessab devolved his comment to an assessment he made soon after the coup, saying that Abdallahi is a cunning and strategic man. Ghessab said he has no doubt that Qatar will help find a solution for the Mauritania crisis. He opined that the likely result of the upcoming Doha meeting will be: 1) release and immediate resignation of detained President Abdallahi 2) creation of an interim government comprised of neither junta nor Abdallahi-regime personalities; and 3) speedy elections. (Comment: The FNDD is reportedly wary of the Qatari initiative and has indicated it will not participate in any Doha meeting unless President Abdallahi and Prime Minister Waghef are released first. End Comment)

¶5. (C) Comment. It is unclear whether the Qatar mediation effort will indeed succeed. The Qatari press is fast to note the growing role Qatar has played as a mediator -- particularly in cooperation with the French. President Sarkozy is due in Qatar next week and Mauritania strategy in

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supposed to be on the schedule (Charge told the Qatari Ambassador that the U.S. position is very closely aligned with the Elysee's). As an Arab country with significant financial clout, Qatar may be able to play an effective middleman. Qatar is primed to receive international kudos for solving this complex political crisis, adding Mauritania to its growing list of crises it has attempted to resolve -- including Lebanon, Sudan and West Bank-Gaza. Qatar's interest in Mauritania is more than merely diplomatic. In recent years, Qatar has pumped significant money into Mauritania. Its focus has curiously been in areas perceived as being potential Islamic extremist threat areas, including Boutilimit (Trarza region) and Nema (Hodh El Chargi region) with potential expansion into Atar (Adrar region), although Ghessab will not admit to that being the reason.  
HANKINS